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U.S. SCORES HANOI ON P. O. W. FILMS

Voices Concern That Foe
Has Role in Trafficking

Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Sept. 26—

The State Department indicated today its concern that North Vietnam might be trafficking movie films of captured American prisoners of war for propaganda purposes.

United States television industry sources reported that the East German film agency Deutsche Film Agentur, had been trying to market several hours of film footage of captured American airmen at an asking price of \$500,000. Well-placed sources said they were concerned that Hanoi might receive some kickback from any such sales.

Officials here also voiced concern that North Vietnam was attempting to distribute films of American prisoners through "middle men" in other countries to antiwar groups.

The officials said they were anxious to avoid criticism of the legitimate operations of American news agencies and television networks which, because they have been refused entry into North Vietnam, have bought films from Japanese, East German, French, British or other cameramen who have been there.

Openly Critical of Hanoi

But the Government is openly critical of Hanoi for showing captured prisoners and promoting the distribution of films.

Robert J. McCloskey, the State Department spokesman, said today at a news briefing that the United States felt that "to the extent that it, in effect, parades prisoners in public display" for the sake of propaganda, Hanoi was acting in "contravention" of the Geneva Convention governing treatment of prisoners of war.

Article 13 of the 1949 convention stipulates that prisoners "must at all times be protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation or against insults and public curiosity."

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North Vietnam signed the convention in 1957, with a reservation that prisoners "pro-

secuted and convicted for war crimes" should not be protected by the Geneva conventions. Hanoi maintains that downed American fliers are war criminals and not prisoners of war.

American officials are concerned also that in some instances North Vietnam may be giving intermediaries altered soundtracks of American airmen "confessing war crimes" to go along with films taken by others.

In at least two instances, professional lip readers have reported that the lip movements of the airmen being photographed were not synchronized with the soundtrack. In one instance, last spring, lip readers reported that the airmen were making small talk about their families and not "confessions."

Spokesmen for both the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System said they had purchased film of prisoner interviews from North Vietnam marketed by the Denpa News Agency of Tokyo and filmed by a Japanese cameraman in Hanoi. Both said they were careful to check soundtracks to insure that it was an American voice speaking and to label their broadcasts as "Communist-approved film" where appropriate.

"We have to buy this stuff. We're not getting handouts from the North Vietnamese Government," Ralph B. Paskman, assistant director of news for C.B.S., said.

Approached by East Germans

Mr. Paskman disclosed that the East German agency had approached the network about a month ago with an offer of several hours of film footage of prisoners at an asking price of \$500,000.

Mr. Paskman said that the agency was willing to provide advance screening of only part of the film and that C.B.S. was unwilling to go along with such an offer. "The relative value of these films has decreased from the time they were first being made available several months ago," he said.

Reuven Frank, executive vice president of N.B.C. News, indicated that the East German agency had also approached his network.

"I dare say they have," he said in a telephone interview. "We've signed no contract with them. But I won't tell you there won't be any contract because I wouldn't rule out anything."

Asked about the \$500,000 asking price, Mr. Frank replied: "We wouldn't pay that for it." Mr. Frank said that the normal price for a one-to-three-minute film was \$100 to \$200.

Industry sources said that in addition to the East German and Japanese agencies, film from Hanoi was also available through such leftist free-lance newsmen as Roger Pic, a Frenchman, and Felix Greene, a British subject who resides in Palo Alto, Calif., both of whom have access to North Vietnam.

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